GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:356
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2003
LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR INDIAN BROADCASTERS
DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA;IQBAL AHMED SARADGI

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to have a fresh look at its policy on uplinking by foreign news channels particularly keeping in view the guidelines for 26% cap on foreign equity;

(b) if so, whether the Government have received any representations from the Indian Broadcasters demanding level playing field; (

(c) if so, whether the Government in response to the demand of Indian broadcasters, has agreed to ensure a level playing field to all broadcasters;

(d) if so, whether this decision was taken at a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister which was also attended by the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers of Finance, External Affairs, Law and Justice and Information & Broadcasting;

(e) if so, the other decision arrived at the aforesaid meeting; and

(f) the extent to which this will be helpful to the broadcasters?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (f) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 356 FOR ANSWER ON 14.8.2003

(a) : An Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) has been constituted by an Order dated 15th July2003 to examine the foreign equity norms/guidelines particularly relating to uplinking of news and current affairs channels, in order to ensure that these are strengthened to prevent violation/breach and to facilitate compliance of the guidelines in letter and in spirit. The Group will discuss measures to plug the loopholes, if any, which may permit any company to circumvent the foreign equity norms.

(b) to (f) : The Broadcasters met the Prime Minister and have given a representation onvarious issues. Some of the issues raised are dealt in this Ministry. No decision has been taken during the said meeting of the broadcasters. However, a copy of their representation has been received in this Ministry and the suggestions made have been noted. It is observed that the broadcasting policies of the Government are constantly evolving and adapting to changed circumstances, to advances in technology and to the needs of the changing times. It is the endeavour of the Government to allow public to enjoy the benefits of such advancements while simultaneously having regulation to ensure a minimum code of conduct in the interests of public decency , morality and national security.